

JOSIAH AND THE TORAH BOOK:  
COMPARISON OF 2 KGS 22:1–23:28  
AND 2 CHR 34:1–35:19.

by

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Theoreticians of narrative literature—narratologists—value the distinction between temporal and causal order in narrative. Both are seen as more or less reflective of a sometimes hypothetical “actual” sequence of events described by the literary artist. E. M. Forster described the difference vividly: “‘The king died and then the queen died’ is a narrative [temporal order]. ‘The king died, and then the queen died of grief’ is a plot [causal order]” (1976, p. 87). But as Roland Barthes says, readers only rarely make the distinction, falling prey to a logical fallacy—*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*. “Indeed, there is a strong presumption that the mainspring of the narrative activity is to be traced to that very confusion between consecutiveness and consequence, what-comes-after being read in a narrative as what-is-caused-by” (cit. Todorov, 1981, p. 42).

Literary theorists are not the only ones to have noticed this common reading practice; authors put it to good use in their manipulations of plot and event sequence. To get a reader thinking that event B is the result of event A, an author need only put the two in the sequence A, B. The least in the kingdom of expositional manipulations at an author’s disposal, event sequencing is greater than any explicit expositional voice that the author might use to prepare the way for his tale; greater, because causality is so commonly assumed in temporal sequences. And a reader’s assumptions are stronger elements in a tale’s power over the reader than anything an author might try to impose by brute expositional force.

The authors of biblical narrative were well aware of the expositional value of plot manipulation, as Sternberg has so ably demonstrated (1985, esp. chs. 6–8). Their preference, in fact, is to let the tale do its own talking, or more exactly, to let the exposition surface implicitly

within the story rather than by means of the external voice of narratorial commentary. The biblical narrator is a narrator "bent on self-effacement" (Sternberg, 1985, p. 266).<sup>1</sup>

An extended illustration of plot structuring using parallel sequencing of event and action *to imply* causality is found in the mirror-like plot structures of 2 Kgs 22:1–23:8 and its daughter text, 2 Chr 34:1–35:19. Here the Bible presents two plot sequences based on a single presumed historical episode. In both, a concatenation of events and actions is described with causal relationships remaining more or less implicit. The implicitness of causality is, nevertheless, robust as is most narratorial exposition in the Bible. Here its strength lies in the devices of scenic parallelism—the narrative device used to compare separate scenes by paralleling important elements in them, such as plot sequence, actions and events—and in *Leitwort* connections between the parallels.<sup>2</sup>

We cannot fully appreciate the rhetoric of plot sequencing in the book of Kings anymore, because we are not privy to the sources of that book. But we are privileged with the source of the Chronicler's account, so we can see how plot sequencing is manipulated by biblical authors and extrapolate that result to plot structure in the book of Kings. These related texts provide an opportunity to study the effects of two related but different plot sequences on the meaning of this particular episode in Israel's history.

There is little to support the idea that both accounts go back to one source or to the events themselves.<sup>3</sup> The literary relationships between the books of Chronicles and Kings have led to the universal assumption that the former depends on the latter. But the dependence, far from diminishing our opportunity for comparative plot analysis, enhances it.

1. Cf. Alter's literary-theological observations on narratorial inobtrusiveness (1981, p. 184): "The assurance of comprehensive knowledge is thus implicit in the narratives but it is shared with the reader only intermittently and at that quite partially. In this way, the very mode of narration conveys a double sense of a total coherent knowledge available to God (and by implication, to His surrogate, the anonymous authoritative narrator) and the necessary incompleteness of human knowledge, for which much about character, motive, and moral status will remain shrouded in ambiguity."

2. "Recurrence, parallels, analogy are the hallmarks of reported action in the biblical tale. The use of narrative analogy, where one part of the story provides a commentary on or a foil to another, should be familiar enough from later literature, as anyone who has ever followed the workings of a Shakespearian double plot may attest. In the Bible, however, such analogies often play an especially critical role because the writers tend to avoid more explicit modes of conveying evaluation of particular characters and acts" (Alter, 1981, p. 180).

3. Cf. Porter (1982, p. 17) for a similar agnosticism on the relationship between the Deuteronomistic history and the history of Israel.

For though we do not know and will probably never know how the book of Kings has reconstrued the actual sequence of events in Josiah's reign, we are able to see the source of the Chronicler's account and compare it with his own arrangement of the plot.

### *The Kings Version*

Even without the comparative source material that we have for evaluating the Chronicler's account of Josiah's reform, it is clear that the plot sequence of 2 Kings is contrived and probably not factually oriented. The narrative is so structured that each major event of ch. 22 is echoed by a "response," a parallel action or statement, in ch. 23. This series of correspondences begins in 22:3, with the events leading to the discovery of the law book, and ends in 24:24, with the last response to the discovered law book. The pattern of repeated events or actions transgresses mimetic probability to underline the importance of the discovery of the law book.<sup>4</sup> The transgression is as strong an expository tactic as the reticent narrator will make. If the reader is to understand this particular view of events, then, he must pay careful attention to the structural pattern that develops across the two chapters.<sup>5</sup> In outline form the correspondences are as follows:

One	
A	B
Josiah sends ( <i>šlh</i> ) Shapan to the house of the Lord (22:3).	Josiah sends ( <i>šlh</i> ) for the elders and they gather. Josiah and retinue go up to the house of the Lord (23:6). <sup>6</sup>

4. Though it is not improbable that Josiah might have made exactly the responses that the book of Kings says he did, it seems unlikely that he would have made them in the exact order and manner as to produce the nicely structured series of repetitions that one finds in this narrative reproduction. Hollenstein comes to a similar skepticism about the historicity of the existing account, though from a redaction critic's point of view (1977, pp. 335–36). On the logic of this intentionalistic reading of scenic parallelism see Sternberg (1985, p. 411). Whatever the historical probability of such a remarkable series of corresponding actions, the literary correspondences argue against the older attempts to separate the report of the discovery of the book from the report of the reform as distinct literary units (see Dietrich, 1977, pp. 14–16 for a listing of such attempts).

5. W. Dietrich (1977, p. 17) has already pointed to the insufficient literary analysis of studies on 2 Kgs 23, which hitherto have been concerned almost exclusively with the historical questions broached by de Wette's famous suggestion about the relationship between the discovered book of 2 Kgs 23 and the book of Deuteronomy. See Eissfeldt (1965, p. 171) for a summary presentation of De Wette's position.

6. Significant vocabulary linkages: *šlh* (22:3; 23:1): first to pay for repairs, second to gather repentants; *lh* (22:4; 23:2): first to pay, second to repent; *sp* (22:4; 23:1) first to

## Two

A	B
The purpose: to pay the Temple restorers (vv. 4-7).	The purpose: to read the book of the covenant and to make a covenant (vv. 2-3).

[The book is found (vv. 8-10).]<sup>7</sup>

## Three

A	B
Shaphan reads the book to the king (v. 10).	Josiah reads the book to the assembly (v. 2). <sup>8</sup>

## Four

A	B
The response: Josiah tears his clothes (v. 11).	The response: a covenant is made and accepted by all (v. 3).

## Five

A	B
The king commands (šwh) Hilkiah and retinue (v. 12).	The king commands (šwh) Hilkiah and retinue (v. 4).

collect monies for repairs, second to gather repentants. The linkages are significant because they show continuity—the same verbal element is used to describe action in each—and difference—the action in the second member is conditioned by the discovery of the law book.

7. Another nice *Leitwort* connection in vv. 8-10 highlights the transformation of activities brought about by the discovery of the law book. In v. 8 Hilkiah tells Shaphan that he has found (*mšʔ*) a Torah book in the Temple. Already here there is a hint of the reformation of activities to take place in the play on the words "scribe" and "book" and in their syntactic conjunction. "Hilkiah, the high priest, said to Shaphan, the scribe (*sōper*), a book (*sēper*) I've found in the house of the Lord." The play foreshadows the characters' ensuing change of interest, from Temple restorations, administered by the scribe (*sōper*), to all-encompassing concern for the dictates of the discovered book (*sēper*). On Shaphan's return to Josiah he reports that he paid out the monies found (*mšʔ*) in the Temple; his duties complete, however, he turns his attention to the book found (*mšʔ*, 22:8; 23:2) in the Temple. And it is the latter find that henceforth occupies attention to the former's neglect.

8. Significant vocabulary linkage: "read" *qrʔ* (22:10; 23:3). Again there is a shift in the usage of the word. First, Shaphan reads the book "before" (*lipnē*) the king; then the king proclaims the book to (*bēʔoznēhem*) the people. Granted that there is a difference in the reader's rank in the two situations, it seems nevertheless that the contents of the book are themselves responsible for the transformation in the way the book is read the second time around. On the covenantal atmosphere that attends the king's public reading of the book see Delcor (1981, p. 93).

## Six

A

Required action: to inquire of the Lord about how to propitiate the wrath of the Lord which has been kindled because of the fathers' neglect of the words of the book (v. 13).

B

Required action: to bring out all idolatrous paraphernalia from the Temple.<sup>9</sup>

## Seven

A

The word of the Lord through Huldah: God is about to bring evil and the words of the book upon this place (Judah) (v. 17).

B

Josiah responds (to Huldah's word) by initiating a purge (vv. 4ff.).<sup>10</sup>

## Eight

A

Why is God doing this? They have burnt incense to other gods and provoked him with the work of their hands (v. 17).

B

Josiah responds by destroying (*šbt*, a permanent sabbatical!) the incense burning priests (v. 5) and pulverizing and burning the offensive works of their hands (vv. 4-20).<sup>11</sup>

## Nine

A

A special note to Josiah: because he has humbled himself, he will die in peace (vv. 19-20).

B

9. Though there is no specific vocabulary linkage, there is a conceptual linkage here. Josiah seeks a way to placate the fiery anger (cf. 23:17) of Yahweh against them in 22:13. In 23:4 the response is to burn any offensive paraphernalia found in the Temple.

10. Again there are no strong vocabulary linkages, but the double reference to "this place" in Huldah's oracle (22:16-17) elicits a strong geographical orientation in Josiah's response: outside Jerusalem (23:4); in the cities of Judah and the precincts of Jerusalem (23:5); outside Jerusalem, at the brook of Kidron (23:6); from the cities of Judah, from Geba to Beersheba (23:8); in the palace (23:12); before Jerusalem (23:13); at Bethel (23:15); and even as far as the cities of Samaria (23:19).

11. Significant vocabulary linkages: "to burn incense", *qr* (22:17; 23:5, 8); "to vex" *k's* (22:16; 23:19).

## Ten

A	B
Hilkiah and retinue return and bring back ( <i>šwb</i> ) word to the king (v. 20).	Josiah returns ( <i>šwb</i> ) to Jerusalem, signifying the completion of his task and response (v. 20). <sup>12</sup>

## Eleven

A	B
The king gathers all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to hear and respond to the book of the law (23:1-3).	The king commands all the people to celebrate a passover in accord with the book of the covenant (v. 21).

## Twelve

A	B
	In order to establish the legal prescriptions of the law book, Josiah destroys the mediums, wizards, teraphim, idols, and abominations in Judah and Jerusalem. (v. 24).

Josiah initiates the entire series with his efforts to continue the Temple restorations begun by Jehoash in 2 Kgs 12. But it is not for his continuation of Jehoash's project that Josiah is toasted as the outstanding king (23:25). The corresponding phraseology in descriptions of the workers and the conditions of payment in Jehoash's reforms (2 Kgs 12:11-15) and in Josiah's (23:5-7) underlines the fact that Josiah's restorations are not innovations.<sup>13</sup> He is simply carrying on the work initiated by Jehoash and this is not his outstanding contribution.

12. Again the vocabulary linkage (*šwb*) bears an important point of development within itself. In the first instance, Hilkiah and his retinue return word (*yāšibū*) to Josiah about what Huldah had said (22:20). And then Josiah, having exhaustively responded to that same word and completed his mission insofar as possible, himself returns (*yāšob*) to Jerusalem (23:20).

13. Dietrich (1977, p. 18) also notes the literary relationship between the two reports of repairs to the Temple. But he goes on to conclude that the two reports must come from two different hands because of small, though significant variations between the two, which cannot be explained as the consequence of the differing historical contexts. His assumption does not allow for the simpler explanation that the author of the two reports, wanting to make different emphases in each report, has changed the necessary items while keeping the rest the same to show the connection. Montgomery (1951, p. 524), on the other hand, approves of Stade's elimination of the entire passage (vv. 4b-7) as a clumsy, secondary

The qualitative difference between Josiah's actions in 22:3–7, and his special actions following the discovery of the law book, is emphasized by the correlations between items 1 and 2. Only in these two pairs does the parallelism foreground a strong discontinuity. The gap dissociates Josiah's reform from his actions prior to discovering the law book. All his reforming activities are governed and guided by the law book; without it, he would not have instituted the reform. The law book, in the book of Kings, is not just a catalyst for reform; it is the very formula that makes the purge and covenant renewal possible.

Josiah's actions in 1 and 2 "A," prior to the discovery of the law book are distinctly different than their opposing parallels in 1 and 2 "B," which are "post-law book" actions. In the remaining parallels there is both continuity and historical development between the "A" and "B" members of the pairs. For example, in item 3, Shaphan reads the book to Josiah (A) and Josiah reads the book to the people (B). In item 5, the king responds positively to the book (A) and then the people do likewise (B). In item 6, Josiah inquires about the proper course of action to take in response to the law book (A), and then makes the actual attempt at proper response (B).

This repetitive sequence of initiative and response is absent in numbers 1 and 2. In 1A Josiah sends Shaphan the secretary to the house of the Lord because it is pay day. But in 1B Josiah himself, along with all the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all the priests, prophets, and people, goes to the house of the Lord—a full house!—to read the law book and renew the covenant. The continuation of Jehoash's restorations to the building that symbolized the covenant has metamorphosed into a renewal and restoration of the covenant relationship itself. And the cause of this radical transformation, according to the plot structure of 2 Kings, is the intervening discovery of the law book.<sup>14</sup>

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addition. Literary tastes change and in Montgomery's day scenic parallelism was neither used nor understood.

14. The same disjunction is foregrounded by the temporal and causal gap that falls between 22:7, in which Shaphan is given his orders for paying the workers, and 22:8, which completely skips any mention of Shaphan carrying out his duty and jumps straight to a description of Hilkiah telling Shaphan what he has found. Dietrich notes the discontinuity (1977, pp. 22–23, "*in hebräischen Erzählung muss das nicht geschehen*" [Dietrich's emphasis]) but reads it as a redactional seam caused by the redactor's rush to get to the law book, his real concern. Literary-historical concerns aside, Dietrich's response to the text is a good example of how a gap such as this elicits a strong impression of discontinuity in the reader.

There is, nevertheless, one strong continuity between these parallel pairs: Josiah, who is the active force behind the restorations of both the Temple and the covenant relationship. In the plot sequence of 2 Kgs 22–23, the discovered law book focuses Josiah's attentions on the crucial themes of obedience to the covenant and the concomitant abolition of idolatry.<sup>15</sup>

In this remarkable series of parallels, the most interesting pairs are items 4–8. Here the narrator describes Josiah's responses to the words of the law book and Huldah's oracle. When the plot sequence in numbers 4–8 is compared with that of the book of Chronicles, which maintains the initiative-response structure, its uniqueness stands out. The sequential revisions in the Chronicles plot lead to an entirely different conception of the significance of the reform. Almost the only change in the Chronicler's account is in the sequencing of events. Yet, thanks to the common assumption of causality in narrative sequences, the result of resequencing is a strikingly different reform.

In addition to the purely literary pleasure of observing the intricate structure of parallels within each of these plots, we also gain a better sense of the merits of these represented sequences of events as sources

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Although Dietrich's historical-critical concerns have led him away from the narrative function of the gap, his response still intimates the intended one: an appreciation of the radical turn of events brought about by the discovery of the book. No more talk of monies or methods of payment or even repairs to the Temple: instead, "I have found the book of the law in the Temple." With that discovery all ongoing activity ceases.

Shaphan's report in v. 9 on the completion of his task is not an expression of the narrator's continuing interest in the subject. It is, rather, the interest of an involved character, who does not know the tremendous significance of the book he bears, reporting back to his king that he has been a good and faithful servant. The relativized context of Shaphan's continuing interest in the repairs is highlighted in two ways. First, he reports on the payments first, before mentioning the book, even though the latter will prove to be of paramount importance and urgency. His dalliance with fiscal matters only excites the reader's curiosity about the contents of the mysterious book. Second, the narrator contextualizes Shaphan's interest with his descriptions of how Shaphan relates the two pieces of information to Josiah. On financial matters Shaphan "brings a report" (*wayyāšeb 'et-hammelek dābār*), in contrast to the news of the book, of which he simply "tells" (*wayyaggēd*) the king, following which he reads it to the king. For Shaphan, the monetary matters are official; the discovered book, incidental.

15. Montgomery (1951, p. 528) says, "the reading by the king is a formalism; a scribe would have been the actual lector." Whatever he means by a formalism and regardless of any verisimilar hypotheses one might conceive, the reason for having Josiah do the reading is quite obviously a part of the total effort to portray his herculean response to the problems at hand. (Montgomery seemed convinced that the narrative was historical by the quality of the scenic description in chs. 22–23; cf. p. 545.)



for the historian. The prospect is not promising. History may indeed repeat itself, but probably not in the filigreed parallelisms that one finds here and throughout biblical narrative.<sup>16</sup>

Item 4 shows that action is the desired response to a reading of the law book. Josiah's expression of humility and contrition after reading the book (A) is matched by the assembly's acceptance of the need for covenant renewal in 4B. Josiah commands Hilkiah and his retinue to inquire about the proper course of action in 5A and in 5B he issues a matching command to Hilkiah and others to begin the purge with the cleansing of the Temple. In response to God's general complaints against the inhabitants of the land—that they have burned incense to other gods and provoked God with the works of their hands—Josiah takes painstaking redressive measures.<sup>17</sup> He aims to please.

In the Kings narrative the most important result of the discovery of the law book is the purge of idolatrous objects and practices: first from the Temple, then from the lands of all of Judah ("from Geba to Beersheba") (23:8), and finally even into the precincts of Samaria (23:15–20). The "B" members of numbers 6 and 8 are Josiah's best efforts to address Huldah's explanation of the significance of the law book for his historical hour.

Just as the end of Huldah's oracle is signalled by the return and retelling (*šwb*) of the oracle to the king in 9A, so Josiah's response is completed when he himself returns (*šwb*) to Jerusalem (9B; 22:20). Item 11 lies outside the most important series of pairs bracketed by numbers 3, the discovery of the law book (22:8–10), and 10, Josiah's return to Jerusalem (23:20). Within these brackets lies the quintessence of Josiah's response as presented in the plot structure of the book of Kings. The importance of this section is marked by the placement of the purge. It is set in parallel with the sole divulgence anywhere in the entire episode of the contents of the law book.

The parallel members of item 11 (A: 23:1 and B: 23:21–23) form a bracket around the vital responses to the law book and the oracle. The

16. On the ubiquity of scenic analogies and parallelisms in biblical narrative see Alter (1981, pp. 10, 21, 166, 180–81); Sternberg (1985, ch. 11); and Eslinger (1985, pp. 195, 200, 219).

17. The question of which deuteronomic laws Josiah responds to must remain subsidiary to our attempt to understand the narrative logic of 2 Kgs 22–23. In context, what is important is that Josiah responds to the word of God as expressed in the discovered law book—whatever that might have been—and in its accompanying oracular interpretation. See, nevertheless, Deut 12:3–6a and 4:19 with respect to 2 Kgs 23:4–20 and Deut 18:9–14 on 23:24.

initiative—the assembly of the people to hear the law (A)—raises some doubt: how will the people respond, and so, how successful will Josiah's efforts to promote obedience and allay God's anger be? In answer, 11B describes the passover celebration. Although the passover stands outside the central response (the purge), it is a fitting conclusion to Josiah's reforms and bears the same imprint as his other zealous responses. The passover resolves the doubts raised by 11A and displays again Josiah's willingness to go the extra distance to placate God.<sup>18</sup>

The series of responses conclude with 12B, the only response without a corresponding initiative. Here Josiah literally outdoes himself in his limitless desire to establish the legal prescriptions of the law book. Even though there is no initiating parallel to cue his response, the momentum of his previous responses continues. Josiah performs one last reform operation, ensuring that the law book's prescriptions are obeyed. The king's unstinting support of the law book is proclaimed to God and man. The narratorial comment in v. 25 shows just how hard Josiah tried to meet the challenge of the law book. He was a king "who turned to Yahweh with all his heart, soul and might, in accordance with all the law of Moses." More than anything else, this Josiah is obedient. Unfortunately, obedience is not enough (23:26).

The theological issue probed by the author of Kings is not difficult to see, even without the contrast provided by the book of Chronicles. In the contextual bounds of chs. 22–23, Josiah's response (23:4–20) is an active interpretation of the oracle of Huldah. Throughout the series of initiatives and responses there is little more he could have done to respond to the demands of the situation and the law book. The plot structure directs our eyes to the speedy and active response of Josiah to the law book and its interpretation. And yet, the net result of all his effort is slight. Having shown all of Josiah's pious bustle and having eulogized him incomparably (23:25), the narrator turns to heaven to reveal the effect of God and the consequence for Israel's survival:

But the Lord did not deviate from his burning anger . . . and he said I will also remove Judah from my sight . . . (2 Kgs 23:26–27).

The conjunction of this revelation and the eulogy immediately after the exhaustive description of Josiah's emergency measures raises enormous questions about the efficacy of redressive piety and the possibility

18. Nowhere in ch. 22 is it said that God is angry because the passover is not properly observed. Yet Josiah commands a passover celebration. And the narrator adds that the passover he legislates was without equal in Israelite history (23:22).

of human behavior changing the course that God has plotted for Israelite history. If an effort such as Josiah's is so futile, what of the craven masses' lesser efforts? If the Dtr narrative is the theodicy it is often called, and I have my doubts, it certainly does not seem here to call for the repentance of a sinful Israel toward a God who listens to the broken and contrite spirit. Without attempting to work out all the implications of this narrative conjunction it is safe to say that the detailed plot structure of 2 Kgs 22–23 is a strong implication of several theological problems here and especially in the conventional reading of Dtr theology.<sup>19</sup>

### *The Chronicler's Version*

The Chronicler's account of Josiah's reform bears the imprint of Kings' phraseology and narrative structure. A relationship of literary dependence between the two narratives is indisputable. Most would agree that the Chronicler is the dependent and that the text of 2 Kings was his primary source throughout.<sup>20</sup> More important than the similarity between the two accounts is the Chronicler's divergent plot sequencing and pair correlations. By relocating some of the paired initiative/response parallels and even deleting sections of his source materials, the Chronicler transforms the nature and significance of Josiah's response.

Of course the suggestion that the Chronicler made creative use of his main literary source in the story of Josiah's reform is contrary to much received, but decaying, opinion about his ingenuity. In Wellhausen's view, the Chronicler was forced to adhere to the text of 2 Kings. "... the free flight of the Chronicler's law-crazed fancy is hampered by the copy to which he is tied, and which gives not the results merely, but the details of the proceedings themselves..." (1973, p. 195). But elsewhere the Chronicler demonstrates a ready willingness to modify and summarize his source when it is detailed and he wishes to compress description or collapse extended plotting.<sup>21</sup> Wellhausen's assertion flies

19. Needless to say, the last word has not been said about the historical theology that is presented in the Deuteronomistic narrative. My reading of 2 Kgs 23 does imply that standard views about the Dtr's putative emphasis on the immediate need for repentance is wrong. Other work that I have done (e.g. Eslinger, 1985) and am doing (e.g. "Rahab & the Gibeonites," presented at the 1985 SBL seminar on narrative) on the Dtr supports this implication. But the topic requires more room than could be given in this already lengthy essay.

20. The main addition in the Chronicler's version is the elaborate rendition of the passover in ch. 35. Cf. Willi (1972, p. 239).

21. Driver (1913, pp. 519–25) has a complete listing of such divergencies. Cf. Noth (1943, pp. 155–56), who agreed that the Chronicler did use written sources as the basis for

in the face of such readiness. His opinion does, however, show the importance of a careful study of plot structure and the other implicit means by which the biblical narrators characteristically frame their view. On the surface, at the level of explicit exposition, Wellhausen is quite right: it appears that the Chronicler has changed little if anything. But underneath, at the powerful level of implication, the Chronicler's account is very subversive of the Kings account.

Wellhausen's view is a reflection of the narrative's insidious camouflage of hidebound adherence to its source. It is conceivable that the text of Kings was already authoritative, perhaps even canonical, in the Chronicler's day. If he wanted to rewrite sacred history and gain an audience for his own version, the Chronicler needed to seem in agreement with his scriptural source. The problem is, how to create a tendentious modification of received religious literature that would be credible to the community that preserves the sacred text? The solution: to appear to say the same things as the normative tradition while implicitly revamping it. The Chronicler's combination of a substantial retention of the material in the book of Kings, in combination with subtle expositional manipulation of the material in altered plotting, is a crafty way of presenting his partisan view.<sup>22</sup> It has a much greater chance of winning others over than a blatant contradiction of the book of Kings' normative presentation. In such a case the evocative role of narrative implication for reader response is exactly the device to achieve the desired result.

The pattern of parallel pairs seen in 2 Kings is repeated in 2 Chr 34-35.

### One

#### A

Having purged the land and the house (or in order to continue purging the land and the house) Josiah sends (*šlh*) Shapan, Ma<sup>2</sup>a-seiah, and Joah to the house of the Lord (34:8).<sup>23</sup>

#### B

The king sends (*šlh*) for the fathers and the elders. Josiah and retinue go up to the house of the Lord (34:29).<sup>24</sup>

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his work, but also called for recognition of the fact that the way they had been used marked the Chronicler as an author-narrator in his own right.

22. Cf. Noth (1943, p. 167-68).

23. The phrase "to purge the land and the house," (*lšḥhēr hā'āreṣ wēhabbāyit*) in 34:8 presents serious exegetical difficulties. There are two grammatical possibilities:

a. According to Rudolph (1955, p. 320) *lšḥhēr* is gerundive. He states that Luther's translation, "nachdem er gereinigt hatte," is factually desirable, though grammatically

## Two

## A

Purpose: to repair the house  
(34:8).

## B

Purpose: to read the book of  
the covenant and to make a  
covenant (34:30–31).

[The law book is found (4:14–18).]

impossible. Reading with LXX(A al) (*‘ote sunetelesan*), he suggests inserting either *kēklot* or *mēklot* before *lējahēr* and that the former could easily have been omitted after *malkō*. GKC §45f–g; 114o also notes the gerundive quality of the infinitive construct + 1 but does not discuss 2 Chr 34:8. Following this line of reasoning, the translation would be “when he had purged the land and the house,” or “having purged the land and the house.”

b. A second possibility is that *lējahēr hā’āreṣ wēhabbāyit* is a clause of purpose placed before the governing verb (*šlh*) for emphasis (cf. GKC §114f, g). Here the second purpose clause of v. 8 is equated with the first; the strengthening (repair) of the temple is part of the purge. The translation would be: the king sent Shaphan and the others “to purge the land and the house and to strengthen the house of the Lord.”

There are problems with both options. A major obstacle to the first is that the house has been purged nowhere in the preceding context (vv. 3–7). Furthermore, there was no need to have it purged, since in the Chronicler’s account it had remained uncontaminated since Manasseh’s repentant efforts at Temple cleansing in 33:15–16. Here the second purpose clause of v. 8 is equated with the first; the strengthening (repair) of the temple is part of the purge. The translation would be: the king sent Shaphan and the others “to purge the land and the house and to strengthen the house of the Lord.” It is possible that the appearance of “the house” in the phrase “having purged the land and the house” is an example of the Chronicler’s efforts to appear to follow the text of Kings, which does have a Temple purification (2 Kgs 23:4), without actually describing such a purification. Maybe the Chronicler was averse to the idea that the Temple needed any cleansing, but was forced to mention the house in connection with the general purge by the Kings account. The economy of his description in the tiny word *bayit* is matched by his unbroken silence about a Temple cleansing in the remainder of chs. 34–35.

The problem with the second alternative is just the opposite. First the double purpose clauses present the ludicrous picture of the three officials, Shaphan the scribe, Ma’aseiah the mayor, and Joah the recorder setting out to continue the purge in the land as well as beginning it in the Temple. Apparently Josiah was incapable of completing his purge of Judean territory. Second, the disagreement with the statement ending in v. 7 that Josiah returned to Jerusalem signals the completion of the purge of the land as it does also in 2 Kgs 23:20.

Maybe the Chronicler was trying to suggest that the strengthening (renovation) of the house of Yahweh was the natural continuation of the purge of the land and was synonymous with the purge of the Temple. The mechanism whereby this equation is made is to set the two clauses to be equated in equivalent grammatical forms and to balance them by placing one at the beginning of the sentence, a syntactically unusual position for a clause of purpose, and one at the end. Thus there would seem to be a Temple purge without actually having one. The purge becomes a restoration, and the latter is imbued with the approbation that the former receives in Kings.

## Three

A	B
Shaphan reads the book to the king (34:18).	Josiah reads the book to the assembly (34:30). <sup>25</sup>

## Four

A	B
Response: Josiah tears his clothes (3:19).	Response: a covenant is made; Josiah makes all present to stand to it; and the people act in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their fathers (34:32).

## Five

A	B
The king commands Hilkiyah and retinue (34:20).	Josiah removes the abominations from N. Israelite territories (34:33a).

## Six

A	B
Required action: to inquire of the Lord about how to propitiate the wrath of the Lord which has been kindled because of the fathers' neglect of the words of the book (34:21).	Josiah makes all present in Israel serve God, and in his lifetime they do not depart from the service of the Lord, God of their fathers (34:33b,c). <sup>26</sup>

The second alternative, that *lējahēr hā'āreṣ wēhabbāyit* should be translated as a purpose clause, has two advantages. First the Chronicler may be seen to turn the "purge of the house" to positive advantage through its transformation, rather than simply trying to be acceptable by slipping in the little word *bāyit* without compromising his own position with an all-out purge. Second it is possible, when translating the clause as "to purge the land and the Temple," to see the "Temple purge" (i.e. restoration) as the continuation of the land purge, and thus to see the purpose clause as a summation of the process culminating in the restoration. In addition the first alternative, "having purged the land and the house," still has the problem of disagreement with the preceding context—small as the word *bayit* may be. In either case there is, contrary to McKenzie (1985, p. 165), what the latter calls "bias" in this addition to the Chronicler's source in the book of Kings.

24. As in the source text, the significant vocabulary linkages here are: "send" *šlh* (34:8, 29), first to pay for repairs, second to gather repentants; and "gather" *ʿsp* (34:9, 29) first to collect monies for repairs, second to gather repentants. *ʾlh*, "go up", is omitted and "the Levites" are added as the collectors (*ʿsp*) of the monies.

25. Cf. note 6.

26. Significant vocabulary linkage: *ʾab* "father": (34:21, 33).

Seven

A	B
The word of the Lord through Huldah: God is about to bring evil and the curses of the book upon this place (Judah) (34:24).	Response: in accordance with the word of the Lord by Moses (35:6), the king's command (v. 10), the book of Moses (v. 12), the ordinance) <i>mišpat</i> , v. 13), and in the service of the Lord, Josiah's unsurpassable passover is celebrated (34:1-19). <sup>27</sup>

Eight

A	B
Why is God doing this? They have burnt incense to other gods and provoked him with the work of their hands (34:25).	[Cf. 7B]

Nine

A	B
A special note to Josiah: because he has humbled himself, he will die in peace (34:26-28).	

Ten

A	B
Hilkiah and retinue return and bring back ( <i>šwb</i> ) word to the king (34:28).	Summation report of the completion of the passover celebration and Josiah's response (34:16).

Eleven

A	B
The king gathers the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, priests and Levites, and all the people to make a covenant (34:29-32).	The Israelite priests and Levites, all Judah and Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem who were present performed the passover.

The Josiah of Chronicles is more astute, religiously speaking, than that of Kings. He begins his reform while yet a lad, in the twelfth year

27. Significant vocabulary linkage: *šēper*, "book": (34:24; 35:12).

of his reign (2 Chr 34:3). Compared to the Josiah of Kings, who is still following in Jehoash's footsteps (2 Kgs 12:4–15) in his eighteenth year (2 Kgs 23:2–7), he is a fast starter.<sup>28</sup> The reason for the Chronicler's emendation is plain. In addition to piety (34:2a, c), Josiah also had the quality of Davidic lineage (34:2b). So he is presented as pious from his youth and not needful of the special cause of the discovered law book to influence him to remove idolatries (cf. Curtis and Madsen, 1910, p. 502).

An interesting deviation from the Kings account of the reform appears in the extent and sequencing of places purged. In the book of Kings the order is: Temple (23:4), Jerusalem and Judah (vv. 5–14), and outlying territories formerly belonging to Israel (vv. 15–20); In Chronicles it is: Jerusalem and Judah (34:3–5), outlying areas bordering on Judah both in the north and south, even as far north as Naphtali (vv. 6–7), and last, the Temple (v. 8). For Kings the Temple is the first place in need of purification; for Chronicles it is last. Even then it only gets a renovation.

The discontinuity, so apparent in the King's account, between pairs 1 and 2 in the series of parallels disappears almost entirely in Chronicles. The purge and reformation in 2 Chr 34:8, which culminate in the reparations to the Temple building, are complemented and completed by the gathering of the Judeans and inhabitants of Jerusalem to go up to the renovated house to renovate the covenant relationship (34:29–31). The unaided actions of Josiah in the first members of the pairs are, to be sure, not of the same importance as his actions in the second pair, which are guided by the discovered book. Gone, however, is the great disparity of the Kings account.

This change is a product of the Chronicler's greater respect for the results of Josiah's actions insofar as they are guided by the ways of

28. The age comparison of Josiah in the books of Kings and Chronicles is not without difficulties. According to Kings, Josiah sends Shaphan to the temple in his eighteenth year, which is to say the tenth year of his reign (he begins to reign when eight years old, 2 Kgs 22:1). The reform of Kings' Josiah following immediately on the discovery of the law book would, therefore, be in the tenth year of Josiah's reign and so, earlier than the Chronicler's date in the twelfth year of Josiah's reign (2 Chr 34:3).

This difficulty disappears when 2 Kgs 22:3 is compared with 2 Chr 34:8, the parallel description of the preliminary events leading to the law book's discovery. Clearly the Chronicler was not trying to say that Josiah's command to Shaphan, occurring in the eighteenth year 'of his reign' (*lēmolkō*) was any later than Kings' eighteenth year 'of the king' (*lammelek*) (= tenth year 'of his reign' (*lēmolkō*)). *lēmolkō* may be a corruption or more likely, the late Hebrew equivalent of *lammelek*. The Chronicler in any event was not trying to set up a different chronology of events than the book of Kings. Rather, he was simply saying that Josiah's reform came at an early period in Josiah's reign, before the discovery of the law book. Cf. Noth (1943, p. 158).



David (34:2) and the directions of David and Solomon (35:4). As Meyers has suggested (1966, p. 269), the Chronicler saw David as a second Moses, with the prerogatives of king and priest: Moses built and planned the tabernacle (Exod 25:9), and David the Temple (2 Chr 28:11–19). For the Chronicler, the existence of this alternate source of authority in the royal dictates of David and Solomon is at least of equal importance as the newly discovered law book.<sup>29</sup> From the deuteronomistic viewpoint of the book of Kings, such was simply not the case.<sup>30</sup> Such indications of catholicity in the Chronicler's recognition of diverse sources of authority may betray an attempt to win the affections of the various groups in Israelite society, whose own sources of authority are honored by the Chronicler's narrative. He modifies the Kings account, mitigating its delegation of exclusive authority to the law book in order to accommodate these other sources of social authority.<sup>31</sup>

The Chronicler's description of the collection and distribution of the monies gathered for the restoration also illustrates one of his characteristic themes. In 2 Chr 34:9 (= 2 Kgs 22:4) the Chronicler adds that the money was collected by the Levites. Also, it was collected not simply "from the people" (as in Kings), but from "Manasseh, Ephraim, all the remnant of Israel, all Judah, Benjamin, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Furthermore, the Levites in Chronicles become the accountants, superintendants, and foremen over the construction workers (34:9–13). In this section, the magnification of the Levites is combined with the theme of unification of disparate elements in Israelite society in their common support of the Temple restorations. The Levites become leaders in Temple restorations that have been supported even by the remnant of

29. The passover celebration, which for the Chronicler is the central event of Josiah's reformative response to the discovery of the law book of Moses, is guided not only by the word of Yahweh through Moses (2 Chr 35:6), the book of Moses (v. 12), and the ordinance (v. 13), but also by the directions of King David and Solomon, his son (vv. 4, 15), and by the command of Josiah himself (vv. 3, 10, 16).

30. Josiah either acts in direct correspondence with the words of the oracle (2 Kgs 23:4–20, items 7 and 8 in the parallels), or else "as written in the book of the covenant" (23:24), in accord with the law of Moses (23:25). On the centrality of obedience to the law in the Dtr and the subjugation of even the monarchy thereto, see Weinfeld (1972, pp. 79–81).

31. Cf. Ackroyd (1973b, p. 108), "[we] see in the Chronicler's presentation an endeavour to unify, to draw together the diverse strands of Israel's thought into a more coherent whole. We may be even more precise in our delineation of him as a theologian, and see him as one who aimed at presenting a unified concept of the nature of the Jewish religious community and hence of its theology and the meaning of its rich and varied traditions."

Israel.<sup>32</sup> If the Chronicler is interested in unifying various groups and traditions, the Temple is the place where it is to occur, and the Levites are among those at the helm.

In item 3 of the structural outline, Chronicles corresponds to Kings with one variation. In both accounts Shaphan reads the book to the king and he reads it to the assembly. Wellhausen suggested, on the basis of the reading *wayyiqrāʾ-bô* (2 Chr 34:18) instead of *wayyiqrāʾēhû* (2 Kgs 22:10), that the Chronicler thought that the discovered law book was the entire Pentateuch, rather than just Deuteronomy (cf. Willi, 1972, pp. 125–26). But the same idiom (*wayyiqrāʾ bārûk bassēper*) appears in Jer 36:10, where it simply means that Baruch read from the book without qualifying whether he read all or only a part of it.<sup>33</sup> The same would seem to be so in 2 Chr 34:18, were it not for the fact that the Chronicler differs so persistently from Kings in this matter. In 2 Kgs 22:18 we find “he read it,” but in 2 Chr 34:18, “he read (from) it;” continuing, in 2 Kgs 22:12, “when the king heard the words of *the book* of the law . . .” is opposed to “when the king heard *the words of the law* . . .” (2 Chr 34:19). The implication is that in Kings, the king heard the whole book, while in Chronicles, he heard only a portion (cf. Curtis and Madsen, 1910, p. 508). Although it is possible to explain these as mere stylistic differences, the fact that two consecutive, nonidentical differences point toward the same semantic difference should not be ignored.<sup>34</sup>

In item 4A, the response to the words of the law book, the Chronicler follows Kings closely. Josiah shows compunction on hearing the words of the law book (2 Kgs 22:1 = 2 Chr 34:19). In Kings, Josiah’s response is understandable, given that the land and Temple have yet to be purged. In Chronicles, where Josiah has completed his purge of the land and where the “purge” or renovations to the Temple are well under way, the reason for Josiah’s contrition must lie elsewhere.<sup>35</sup>

32. On the central role given to the Levites by the Chronicler, see von Rad (1930, pp. 80–81, 119).

33. Ackroyd (1973a, p. 202) discusses this matter at length.

34. To decide the issue would require a detailed examination of the correspondences between the responses to the law book in Chronicles and Kings, including a comparison of the passages in the Pentateuch to which they might be related. If there is significance in the difference between Chronicles and Kings, the expected result would be that Chronicles would refer to Deuteronomy or deuteronomistically redacted traditions.

35. It is possible that the lack of motivation is just a lapse in verisimilitude due to the Chronicler’s overriding concern to replace the purge with the passover.

Chronicles differs from Kings in 4B. Several divergencies are random stylistic variations,<sup>36</sup> such as the presence or absence of *ʔet* before the definite object, or spelling variations. The most significant variation is found in the difference between 2 Kgs 23:3 and 2 Chr 34:32. In Kings the people voluntarily agree to stand (*wayyaʿāmōd kol-hāʿām babbērūt*) by the covenant, but in Chronicles Josiah first makes the people stand (*wayyaʿāmēd ʔet kol-hannimšāʔ*) by the covenant, and then they act in accordance with it. The people of Kings, on hearing the words of the law book, see an obvious need for covenant renewal and act immediately upon that conviction. Perhaps the Chronicler's people do not respond immediately because it seems that Josiah had already done what the law book required. More likely, however, this is another example of the Chronicler's attempts to exalt Josiah as the moving force behind the reform. In Chronicles, Josiah is directly responsible for the reform of the land, the Temple, and the people.

The Chronicler's portrait of Josiah not only allows him to exalt the Davidic kingship as the corner stone of the nation's continued existence, but also seems to be in better agreement with Huldah's oracle than with that of Kings.<sup>37</sup> In the oracle, the inhabitants of the land are responsible for the coming evil because they have forsaken the Lord. Josiah, on the other hand, is commended and rewarded for his humility. The similarity of the people's response to Josiah's response in Kings is uncharacteristic; it demonstrates the convincing power of the law book. In Chronicles, on the other hand, the people's response agrees with their characterization in the oracle. The words of the law book do not convince them, and the king's own authority and power are required before they stand to the covenant. Perhaps this difference is another example of the Chronicler's de-emphasis of the law book in favor of the king's authority. Chronicles recognizes a dual authority because it combines two separate streams of tradition that originally recognized different sources of authority.

In Chronicles, item 5 of the narrative structure lacks the B part of the pair formations. With this major departure from the narrative structure of Kings the Chronicler openly begins to state his differences. In 5A, Josiah's command to inquire of the Lord about what to do agrees with Kings. In numbers 5 and 6 "B" the Chronicler creates his own version of

36. By random, I mean only that there is no consistent pattern of Chronicles supplying all the definite object markers or clarifying grammatical points in the manner of a Lucianic recension of the LXX.

37. On the Davidism of the Chronicler see North (1963, pp. 376–81).

the text of 2 Kgs 23:24. In the Kings narrative, 23:24 appears as a superlative finishing touch in the series of Josiah's responses to the law book. For Kings, v. 24 describes a special type of reformatory effort to remove a particular category of objectionable religious practices from the precincts of Judah and Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> The Chronicler transposes this account of superlative reform and sets it in the gap left by the absence of a "B" part in numbers 5 and 6, the evicted Temple purge, which was unnecessary in his view.

The Chronicler also radically alters the content of 2 Kgs 23:24. The meaning of the alteration can only be appreciated in the light of what has gone before. Josiah has already purged Judah and Jerusalem (34:3-5) and has even made a few forays into old Israel (34:6-7). He has renovated, or is in the process of renovating the Temple (34:8-13). Finally, he has reestablished the covenant and made all inhabitants of Jerusalem and the tribe of Benjamin stand to it (34:32). There would seem to be no possibility of further improvements in response to the great wrath of God poured out on account of the fathers' dereliction of duty to the law.

The Chronicler's solution to this difficulty is to have Josiah complete the purge of the northern kingdom, begun already in 34:6-7. Josiah removes all the abominations from Israelite territory.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, just as he had made those present in Judah and Jerusalem stand to a covenant (34:32), he now makes those in the northern kingdom serve the Lord. Thus 34:33 is the northern equivalent of the accomplished southern reform. The equivalence is highlighted by the parallel structuring of vv. 32 (item 4B) and 33 (numbers 5 and 6 "B") in ch. 34:

4B. *wayya'āmēd ʔet kol-hannimšā bîrûšālaïm ûbinyāmin*

5B. *wayyāsar yôšiyāhû ʔet-kol-hattôʔebôt mikkol-hāʔārāšôt ʔāšer libnê yiśrāʔēl*

4B. *wayya'āsû yôšēbē yêrûšālaïm kibrit ʔēlōhîm ʔēlōhē ʔābôtēhem*

5B. *wayya'ābēd ʔet kol-hannimšāʔ bēyiśrāʔēl laʔābôd ʔet-yhwh ʔēlō-hēhem kol-yāmāyw*

4B. He made all found in Jerusalem and Benjamin stand.

5B. Josiah removed all the abominations from Israelite possessions.

4B. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem acted according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

38. For the possible legal basis of this additional purge, see Deut 18:9-14; Lev 19:31; 20:6.

39. The Chronicler's source, 2 Kgs 23:24, described such actions only within the boundaries of Judah/Jerusalem.

- 5B. He made all found in Israel serve the Lord their God all his days; they did not turn from following the Lord, God of their fathers.

Having already put his own kingdom in order, Josiah proceeds to do the same for the remnants of the northern kingdom.

Numbers 5 and 6 "B" also exhibit the Chronicler's veneration of the Davidic monarchy. In 5A the task is simple information gathering, the task of priest, secretary, and servant (34:20). In 5B the response is the action resulting from that inquiry, the task of King Josiah himself. In 6A God's wrath is poured out because of the fathers' neglect of the word of the Lord, as found in the law book (34:21). In 6B, therefore, Josiah makes the contemporary Israelites serve the God of their fathers, thereby redressing the carelessness of the fathers.

To the demands of the law book Josiah has presented a recovenanted, obedient Judah and a serving Israel. Unless he is to begin converting the heathen, his reformation activities are finished. The Chronicler moves on, therefore, to a more plausible responsive action, the passover. He follows Kings in this transition from reform activities followed by passover celebrations (2 Kgs 23:4–20, followed by vv. 21–23), but differs in making the passover *the* response to the only explicit reference to the content of the book and the reason for God's wrath. This brings difficulties for the Chronicler's adapted narrative structure, which up to this point has been more or less verisimilar, on account of the incongruity between the "A" and "B" elements of numbers 7 and 8.<sup>40</sup>

Huldah's oracle forecasts imminent evil because of the people's apostasy and idolatry (34:24–25). The expected response to numbers 7 and 8 "A" would be a religious reform and renewal, as in 2 Kgs 23:4–20.<sup>41</sup> Instead, the Chronicler places the great passover celebration as a response to the impending doom and the curses of the book. There is no explicit requirement for a passover celebration in items 7 or 8 "A", and one looks in vain for a pentateuchal law that directly promises evil and curses for failure to keep the passover. Both Lev 23:5ff. and Deut 16:1–8 require passover celebration, and both are set within bodies of commands, ordinances, and statutes culminating in the possibility of blessing or curse (Lev 26:3–39; Deut 28). But the connection between the passover and the curses is weak, due to the amount of intervening material. By situating 35:1–19 as the response to the impending evil and the curses

40. The same difficulty appears in item 4A and its unexpected response. See previous note 31.

41. The covenant has already been renewed in 2 Kgs 23:3, and it parallels Josiah's garment tearing as a sign of contrition.

of the book, the Chronicler effectively eliminates this separation of curses and the command to keep the passover in his own narrative.

The result is not a false claim for the requirement of such a passover. Rather it is an emphasis on the commandment of passover observance. The Chronicler makes the passover a binding duty, the neglect of which brings evil and the curses of the law on the head of the disobedient. In spite of the importance of this claim for the Chronicler's argument, contained implicitly in the plot structure, he avoids making any explicit expository statement in its support. Instead, he relies exclusively on the reader's normal assumption that sequence implies causality.

Remaining is the problem of the incongruity between the complaints of numbers 7 and 8, and the response. How could the great passover celebration be legitimated against the reform of Kings as a proper response to such criticisms? The first step in the Chronicler's legitimation is to close the gap between the command of Torah to keep the passover, and the curses that do, in fact, result from real neglect of it. Second, the Chronicler changes the wording of the Kings text from God's bringing "all the words of the book" upon the people, to God's bringing "all the curses written in the book" upon the people. In Deut 28:15, the curses are invoked whenever someone neglects the voice of God, or the commandments, or the statutes that Moses commands. When the Chronicler says that "the curses" instead of simply "the words" are being brought against the people, he emphasizes that some form of legal breach has occurred, and so that some form of atonement in accord with the broken law or laws is necessary. While this maneuvering has not completely altered the sense of numbers 7 and 8 "A", which remain under the influence of the reference to idolatry in 8A (2 Chr 34:25), it has gained the necessary foothold for the passover as a plausible response to the words of the Mosaic law book (34:14).

Next, in describing the proceedings of the passover the Chronicler takes care to note that it is done according to the word of the Lord through Moses (35:6), as written in the book of Moses (v. 12), and in accordance with the ordinance (v. 13). By emphasizing that the reason for God's wrath is the non-fulfillment of the commandments and that the passover was carried out in detailed response to the commandments through Moses, the Chronicler removes much of the incongruity.<sup>42</sup> The

42. The acceptability of the passover done in accordance with the book of Moses as a response to the discovered law book is made even more so by the Chronicler's description of the book found in 34:14. It is "the book of the law of the Lord through Moses" (no parallel in Kings; cf. 2 Kgs 22:8).

other obvious justification for the appearance of the passover celebration as response in items 7 and 8 is that Josiah has already rectified the problems of idolatry by the purge of Judah and Israel, the restorations performed on the Temple, the covenant renewal in Judah and the religious reform in Israel. The only thing lacking, therefore, is the correct performance of the cultic ceremonies and duties.

In item 10, the Chronicler continues his substitution of a passover for a purge by changing 10B into a report of the completion of the passover (35:16), instead of the completion of a purge (2 Kgs 23:20). Again as in Kings, the description of the oracle's recitation to Josiah is balanced by a description of the conclusion of Josiah's response.

Finally, the Chronicler agrees with Kings in the last item, number 11. The call to covenant renewal is balanced by the celebration of passover in both Kings and Chronicles, although in Chronicles it is merely a recollection and not an actual performance.

### *Summary*

For Kings, the law book is primary in the reform. Josiah merely supplies the means to accomplish the dictates of the law book. The means of accomplishment involves, in particular, the willingness to act in accordance with the law. Josiah was unsurpassable in his willingness to comply with the law of Moses (2 Kgs 23:25). Without the guidance of the book of the law, however, Josiah was simply one of a line of kings who did right in the eyes of the Lord, as demonstrated by his pre-law book continuation of Jehoash's Temple restorations, in which the Kings presentation shows nothing that goes beyond his predecessor. The mirror-like plot structure of the Kings account has been constructed to pinpoint the law book as the reason for the Josianic reform.

Extrapolating from the Chronicler's radical transformation of his source through plot manipulation, we can legitimately surmise that the paramount position of the law book in the Kings account is similarly a tendentious narrative assertion, of which historians should be chary. The reliability of the surmise depends on the formal analogy between plot structures and functions in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Given the intricacy of each and the apparent artifice of the paralleled scenic panels, the impugnment of historicity seems a consequence that flows from the artistry of the text itself, once it is appreciated as literary artifice. Just as the historian would not trust the plot sequence of the book of Chronicles as the framework for his own reconstructed narrative sequence in his history, so the sequence of the book of Kings, and especially the pivotal discovery of the law book, should be treated with

greater circumspection than hitherto.<sup>43</sup> If a new understanding of the plot structures of these parallel accounts carries a depreciation in their value as historical sources, the incomparable dividend is a more exact appreciation of their meaning, which is so inextricably bound up in the implications of plot structure.

The Chronicler's handling of the Kings text suggests that he may have been dealing with a text that had already attained an authoritative status in the community. Given that his own views differed from those of the author of Kings, the Chronicler expressed his views in subtle alterations to the plot structure, and by deleting Kings' material or adding new expansionistic details. That he was often constrained to leave the Kings text as it stood, however, is evidenced by those places in his narrative where he has to maneuver, as for example around the implications of 34:25.

Josiah's ability to carry out reform measures in anticipation of the undiscovered law book, and his dominant role in the responses to the law book once it is found, illustrate the Chronicler's respect for the Davidic monarchy and the traditions that had been developed with respect for the authority of the Davidic king. In the Chronicler's account of Josiah we see a blending of two sources of authority: the monarchy and the law. Of course the blend is a well-known trait;<sup>44</sup> here we see it in a structural form.

43. By analogy, the same may be said of other pejorative comparisons that detriment the Chronicler's narrative when compared to Kings as a historical source. Noth, for example, says that the Chronicler's version of the Temple construction is a product of the central role that David and Jerusalem play in the theology of this historical novel (*Geschichtserzählung*). Noth views this change as a correction to the "old and genuine tradition about the construction of the Jerusalem Temple by Solomon" (1943, p. 113). A similar comparison of Kings to Chronicles on that episode reveals as much tendentiousness in Kings as there is in Chronicles. The critical promises to David (2 Sam 7) are so recurrent and central to the Kings version of the Temple building project and so problematic in the entire Dtr narrative (cf., e.g. Cross, 1973, pp. 241-89; Nelson, 1981, pp. 99-128) that no one, especially not the usually circumspect Noth (e.g. p. 112), should fall prey to the assumption that Kings is the "older, more genuine account." Older yes; more genuine—who is to say? The contrivance in Kings' version is plainly visible in Yhwh's illogical remarks on why David cannot, but Solomon can build the Temple in 2 Sam 7. The problem resurfaces in Solomon's own tendentious views about why it was that he, and not David, was designated to build the Temple (1 K 5:3-5). Moreover, Solomon's view contradicts Yhwh's (2 Sam 7) but aligns closely to that expressed by David in 1 Chr 22:8 (cf. 28:3).

44. Cf. Noth (1943, p. 174): "... the central concern of the Chr was to establish the legitimacy of the Davidic monarchy and the Jerusalem temple as the true Yahwistic cult site."



The Chronicler shows a strong interest in the rehabilitation of the northern kingdom and its reunification with Judah. This interest is almost completely absent in Kings. In Chronicles the remnant of Israel is seen united with Judah, Benjamin, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the effort to renovate the Temple (2 Chr 34:9). Furthermore, Josiah later makes the Israelite serve Yahweh, just as he makes the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the Benjaminites stand to a covenant (34:23–24). The nearest the book of Kings comes to this interest in a unified Israelite religious community is its description of Josiah's brief forays into Samaritan territory to wipe out the remnants of the idolatrous practices instituted by the former northern kings (2 Kgs 23:15–20).<sup>45</sup> The Chronicler seems to suggest that the Temple can serve as a common place of worship for Judahites and Israelites (34:9) in the common worship of the Lord, God of the fathers (34:32–33).<sup>46</sup>

In both narratives the implicit commentary by way of plot structuring in scenic parallels and implied causality is the dominant expository strategy. Deficiencies in previous discussions of these narratives are mainly due to failure to attend to this typical manner of exposition. Both narratives use narrative sequence to stake their own unique claims about the significance and consequences of the Josianic reform.

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45. The use of the name Samaria in 2 Kgs 23:19 instead of Israel to describe the northern kingdom is pointed and reflects a more negative attitude to the northern kingdom, just as the prophecy of v. 17 does (cf. 1 K 13:1–4). There is no hint of any concern to reform Israel, as there is in Chronicles.

46. Presumably, the reference to the fathers is to those Israelites before the divided kingdom, and likely to the Israelites under the unified reign of David. Noth's view (1943, pp. 174–75) that the Chronicler was probably addressing the issue of the Samaritans and the legitimacy of their cult is supported by this comparative reading of 2 Chr 34. For more detailed consideration of the Chronicler's open-armed attitude to all descendants of the Israelite tribes, see Williamson (1977, e.g. pp., 126, 140; cf. McKenzie, 1985, p. 165).

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